

## Grand Opening of University of Appalachia College of Pharmacy (August 10, 2005)

Grundy, Virginia

I am pleased to return to Buchanan County this afternoon to celebrate the opening of the University of Appalachia College of Pharmacy. In just a few short days, approximately 80 students will begin their studies here for a Doctorate of Pharmacy degree. In so doing, they will further stimulate the economy of the Town of Grundy and Buchanan County.

I am truly impressed with what I see when I am in Grundy these days. As the Grundy Flood Control and Redevelopment Project moves ahead, the Town is now preparing to begin construction on the site to enable several waiting businesses to locate within the new town limits. The Virginia Department of Transportation, as we learned during a special community meeting I hosted last week, is also moving rapidly forward with their plans to make upgrades to Route 460 and connect the roadway with the new town.

The development within the Town of Grundy does not stop there. As we celebrate today the inaugural class of the College of Pharmacy, we need to look no further than the Appalachian School of Law to know what the future holds for this new endeavor. Since its doors opened in August of 1997, approximately 300 students have graduated, and 380 full-time students are now enrolled, resulting in an estimated economic benefit of \$10 to \$12 million annually for Buchanan County.

New private investment is also taking place within the community as local entrepreneurs are realizing the new investment opportunities which exist here. Dozens of new housing units have been constructed or renovated in Grundy and its surrounding areas to make room and accommodate the influx of students and faculty who now reside in the community. New eating establishments are also popping up. And as a direct result of the College of Pharmacy, which celebrates its grand opening today, Buchanan County's first major apartment complex in twenty years is now under construction adjacent to the Pharmacy School's property. The new apartments are being financed by local private investors and will provide nearly 100 new housing units for new students, faculty and staff.

With all of these outstanding accomplishments, we have much to celebrate today as the College of Pharmacy prepares for its first day of classes.

The new College of Pharmacy is located on the first floor of the Buchanan County Technology Park in which we are gathered today, and the 12,000 square feet of space which the College now occupies has been completely transformed into a modern classroom and laboratory facility.

The College campus houses a large lecture hall equipped with two state-of-the-art multimedia projectors which are ceiling mounted. There are two additional classrooms and a laboratory. Three computers are located within the

laboratory that are loaded with QS1, the leading pharmaceutical software that is used in retail pharmacies today. The campus also houses a library and a learning resource center with a separate computer laboratory equipped with 8 computers and a laser printer. The faculty offices are also located here, as are separate faculty and student lounges.

Last year, I announced a federal grant in the amount of \$50,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission, and that funding has been used for the purchase of some of the lab equipment housed here and for various administrative costs associated with the development of the Pharmacy School. In addition, I secured approval from the Congress for a \$500,000 federal appropriation. College officials are currently using those monies for the purchase of additional general and advanced laboratory equipment that will be used here and for the clinical studies which will take place at Buchanan General Hospital.

The campus is wired for T-1 high-speed Internet service which is being provided by Verizon Avenue, and data access ports are located throughout the facility to enable students to use their laptop computers in various places around the building.

Students at the College of Pharmacy will pursue a three-year Doctorate of Pharmacy degree. This three-year Pharm D. program is one of only four year-round, three-year programs in the nation and features more teaching contact hours and clinical training than the typical four-year pharmacy degree training program.

The College is also making strides to achieve full accreditation as soon as possible. The Pharmacy School has already received its pre-candidate status from the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education and is on track to receive provisional accreditation next year. Following the graduation of the College's inaugural class and the administration of the National Board examinations, the College of Pharmacy will receive a thorough review and have the opportunity to obtain full accreditation.

I would like to take the opportunity of these remarks to recognize several individuals who have been instrumental in the success which we celebrate today.

Frank Kilgore, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the University of Appalachia, and other members of the Board, have shown tremendous leadership and foresight in their efforts to establish the College of Pharmacy. I thank them for their steadfast commitment to creating new opportunities for economic development in Buchanan County.

I also want to recognize Joe Keene, Chairman of the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors, other members of the Board, and Grundy Mayor Roger Powers for their outstanding support of this project.

The Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority -- Executive Charlie Yates and his fine staff -- provided assistance to the County in obtaining funding for the development of the College of Pharmacy, in addition to providing financial support of its own. I thank them for helping to make this project a reality.

The Thompson Foundation and the Appalachian Regional Commission, led by Federal Co-Chair Anne Pope, provided critical funding to jump start this initiative.

Finally, I want to thank my District Director, Laura Lee, for her persistent and persuasive efforts.

With today's grand opening of the University of Appalachia College of Pharmacy, we celebrate the opening of a new door to economic opportunity for the residents of Buchanan County. The new institution will further complement the outstanding strides which have been made in recent years to promote new growth and stability in the community. I thank everyone here for the tremendous efforts and support which have made the new College of Pharmacy possible.